

to all people of our hemisphere; to turn the revolution in information technology to our children's advantage by opening a world of knowledge to all—all—our children. One hundred fifty years ago, education was Sarmiento's great passion. Today, it is central to our ability to prove that democracy works for all people and to the future we are trying to build together.

We are also partners in helping those around the world who take risks for peace. I thank the people of Argentina for sending peacekeepers into troubled places all over the Earth and setting an example for all nations. The robust bonds of friendship between Argentina and the United States are rooted in our shared commitment to peace and freedom, to prosperity and security, to the integrity of the individual, the family, and the community. They are at the heart of all we dream for our future.

President Menem, I salute you for the extraordinary leadership you have shown in helping our nations turn this corner in history. No one in our hemisphere has done more to seize the opportunities of this new era. Generations to come will remember this as a moment when our two nations served the deepest interests of our people. And tonight the United States is proud to work alongside Argentina, an Argentina that is fulfilling Domingo Sarmiento's greatest hopes.

Ladies and gentlemen, let us raise a glass to the new partnership between our people for peace and prosperity, here and throughout the world.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:40 p.m. in the ballroom at the Rural Center. In his remarks, he referred to President Menem's daughter, Zulema Maria Menem; Mayor Fernando de la Rúa of Buenos Aires; and Raul Alfonsín, former President of Argentina.

Remarks to Business Leaders in Buenos Aires

October 17, 1997

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you, President Fedrigotti, President Menem, distinguished members of the Argentine Government, to the members of Congress and Cabinet in our administration

who are here. Let me say on behalf of all of them, we are delighted to be here. We have had a wonderful stay in Buenos Aires. And we thank this distinguished group of Argentine and American business leaders for giving all of us the opportunity to join you this morning.

When President Bush came here in 1990, it was a very different time for Argentina. Inflation was soaring, output was plunging, trade was anemic. Today, the country has experienced a truly remarkable turnaround. It is a great credit to the people of Argentina, to wise decisionmakers, and to the direction that President Menem has set. You have cut inflation to almost zero. The expanded trade attracted a flood of foreign investment, spurred impressive growth. You are on the move—good for Argentina, and good for America, for since 1990, our exports to Argentina have more than tripled. In the same period, American investment has soared from \$2 billion to approximately \$12 billion, and it's still growing.

Trade has contributed a quarter of Argentina's growth over the past 3 years. And of course, behind these individual statistics lie many, many success stories that are paying off for people in human as well as economic terms.

To take just one example, General Electric Power Systems has sold state-of-the-art gas turbines and generators that will account for more than 30 percent of Argentina's new power generation capacity. That supports jobs for Argentinean and American workers alike and will provide Argentina with higher quality, lower costs, more environmentally friendly power to keep engines humming, classrooms lit, and the economy growing. It is clearly the kind of win-win situation we see repeated over and over again.

And of course, we see in Argentina a mirror of what is happening around the region today as barriers fall and trade expands and people everywhere gain greater opportunities for new jobs, new skills, and higher incomes. We see it also as a harbinger of what we might build in the future in all of this region for all of the people.

Since 1993, when I took office and established a new economic policy that focused on reducing our deficit, investing in our fu-

ture, and expanding trade, expanding trade has accounted for one-third of America's strong economic growth. Now I am working to persuade Congress to renew the fast-track authority traditionally given to Presidents so that we can do even more to speed the falling of barriers and the opening of doors.

Latin America's emerging markets are expected to grow more than twice as fast as the economies of the advanced industrial nations. Now, it is clearly in the United States interest to be at the forefront of that for the next generation. But I want to emphasize to all of you that this is, for us, about more than economics. We also want to be genuine partners in seizing all the opportunities and meeting all the challenges of this new age. It's about far more than just trade figures. It's also about political partnerships, the preservation of democracy, the strengthening of the social contract to include all people who aspire to better lives, the ability to fight drugs and crime and terrorism, the ability to build a future that is consistent with the dreams of those who founded all our nations.

Argentina is at the heart of movements bringing our hemisphere together, working with your neighbors through MERCOSUR and your strategic alliance with Brazil to spur democracy, economic reform, and regional security cooperation. MERCOSUR not only expands trade and prosperity, it has also reinforced democracy and promoted peace, as greater independence and shared hopes for the future make a return to past hostilities unthinkable.

The United States welcomes constructive efforts by others to bring our hemisphere together. Every step taken, whether it's MERCOSUR, NAFTA, CARICOM, the Andean Pact, helps to build momentum toward what I believe should be all our ultimate goal, a free-trade area of the Americas.

President Menem and I reached agreement that we should launch comprehensive negotiations at the Santiago summit in April, moving from a common agenda to a common action plan. This, after all, is the course we all embraced at the Summit of the Americas in Miami in late 1994. We share a vision of a thriving American market of 800 million people from Point Barrow, Alaska, to Patagonia, investing in each other's future, en-

riching each other's lives, strengthening each other's institutions for freedom and democracy and peace and security.

But even as we work to open markets, we need to make sure that expanding commerce closes, rather than widens, the gaps between the haves and have-nots in our hemisphere. We don't want to leave anyone behind, and it is not in our interests to do so, for in the 21st century, increasingly, the wealth of nations will lie in the minds and hearts of people. We can and must ensure that rising trade means a rising standard of living for all.

How are we to do this? Some, even in countries that have done very well, like ours, believe that we should become more protectionist. But it's not an option. It will only make things worse, for the world economy, whether any government likes it or not, is already on a fast track. None of us can shut the world out or pretend somehow that we can compete in the global economy by closing ourselves off from our neighbors. We are riding a great tide of change, and we can turn it into a powerful tide of progress for all people, provided the benefits and the burdens are shared fairly and the policies are wise and free people to fulfill their own destinies.

That means deepening democracy and the rule of law, including the free press and the independent judiciary that serve our citizens everywhere. The same rule of law that protects human rights upholds the sanctity of contracts and helps to build a stable investment environment. We must also insist on worker protections so that trade enhances working conditions instead of undermines them. We must promote sustainable development and prove that you can, and indeed must, protect the environment as we grow the economy. And we must equip all our people with the education, the training, and the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century world. We must master the new technology that can bring all people into the future and bring them all into the same world of knowledge, no matter where they live. We can make it so that every book, every map, every work of art is at every child's fingertips with the click of a computer mouse. But first they must have access to computers and they need to know how to use them.

Just as the Internet is transforming education, it is also expanding the horizons of commerce. Already Argentines can purchase everything from books to computer equipment with the simple stroke of a keyboard. Trade on the Internet is growing so fast that in just a few years it will generate hundreds of billions of dollars in goods and services. It is, indeed, already the fastest growing social organism in all of human history.

If we establish an environment in which electronic commerce can thrive, free from unnecessary governmental regulations or other burdens, then every computer will be a window of opportunity for every business in the world. A global network of sales and distribution will be within reach of even the smallest or most isolated company. You can start a business today and trade around the world tomorrow. That's what the Internet will mean. But in order for the digital economy to flourish, it must be market led. President Menem and I discussed the importance of making sure that this dynamic medium is not weighed down by the heavy hand of Government.

We live in a time of extraordinary opportunity. Revolutions in technology, information, and communications bring our people and our nations closer than ever before, opening new possibilities and also giving the organized forces of destruction new opportunities to reap ill-gotten gains through crime and drugs and terrorism.

The promise before us is bright, but it is not inevitable. We must seize the opportunities and we must meet the challenges and we must do it together. We have to focus on the future, not the past; on embracing all, not dividing our people as they have been too often; on building an economy that works for everyone who is willing to work in it. We have to make our common commitment to peace and freedom, to prosperity and democracy, and we have to make it irreversible.

If we support these policies and this direction, then we can make our entire region an image of what we'd all like to be, a place where freedom and prosperity go hand in hand, a place where everyone feels that he or she has a chance, where every boy or girl believes that they can grow up in dignity to live out their dreams, a place where we work

together to fight those terrible threats of crime and terrorism and drugs, a shield against whatever storms the future may bring, an alliance to seize whatever new chance the future may hold, a model, in short, for the 21st century world.

That is what I want for the Americas, that is what you are building every day here in Argentina, and that is what I hope together we can build for our children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 a.m. at the Sheraton Buenos Aires. In his remarks, he referred to Carlos Fedrigotti, president, American Chamber of Commerce.

Statement on Line Item Vetoes of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 1998

October 17, 1997

I have used my line item veto today to save taxpayers \$19 million by canceling eight projects in the 1998 Energy and Water Appropriations Act that are unwarranted.

Today marks the sixth time I have used my line item veto authority to save the taxpayers money by canceling unjustified, special interest provisions. The savings are real—\$2 billion to the taxpayers. Just as important, the threat of a line item veto serves as a deterrent to ill-conceived, special interest spending proposals.

For today's action, the cancellations include five water projects that I did not request in my budget; that are new rather than ongoing projects; that have greater costs than benefits; that are recreational for a limited number of people; or that should be funded at the local level. I also canceled three projects that are unwarranted corporate subsidies.

In taking this action, I tried to show deference to Congress' role in the appropriations process. I accepted the vast majority of the 423 projects in this bill that I did not request in my budget. Nevertheless, I feel strongly that my administration should look for opportunities to save taxpayer dollars by striking unwarranted provisions of bills that come before me.